1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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642 But to 'reach' and to 'control' means often wholesale exploitation rather than protection and security. Here the fundamental weakness of
661 a sovereignty in which political control is vested corporately in a ruling group, the members of which are entrusted severally with executive
669 power, is clearly revealed. In other words, in the employment of the political machinery the aspect of duty towards the state is not invariably harmonized with the aspect of class privilege Thus the peace of the country was often disturbed by the rulers themselves: one feudal lord breaking into the territory of another, levying illegal taxes; a royal messenger misappropriating tributes which he was to collect for his royal master; or a royal prince raiding on his own the countries which had paid their tribute and thus bought their claim to the 'king's peace'. King and notables alike would rally against the man who thus betrayed his loyalty to the kingdom. Punitive expeditions, loss of office, and heavy punishment were the reward of those who broke the 'king's peace' and committed what the Nupe call *cin amana* (see p. 110).

642 Revolts were quelled, raids answered with raids, war fought with war, and the 'king's peace' eventually re-established. But under conditions like this, protection and public security could be, at the best, only very unequal and unstable. The stress and tension of the system revealed itself in the various attempts on the part of the peoples of Nupe to secure better safeguards for their civic rights. Direct rebellion was the crudest, and, in fact, least efficient, weapon. Siding with one feudal lord against another, with pretenders against the ruling king, and princes against their royal overlord, meant obtaining, if not permanent security, the promise of protection and favours. Villages and districts could not choose their overlords or feudal delegates: but there are one or two indications that they could change their political status. Thus the villages of Sakpe and Kutigi claim that they obtained under *Etsu* Masaba, in return for heavier taxation, the legal franchise normally granted only to royal domains. I have mentioned the frequent efforts of the Kyedye to secure a semi-autonomous position. The Kusopa of Laboži, taking advantage of their exceptional economic position as the kola-nut planters of the kingdom, were also able to secure from *Etsu* Masaba the status of a royal domain equal to that of Beni and Kyedye.

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTSHIP

641 The privileges granted by one *Etsu* could be abolished by another. Security granted by charter could be infringed by powerful feudal lords.
566 Where the group as such, village, or district, failed to obtain permanent
675 security, individuals could seek protection of a different order: the declaration of voluntary allegiance to a feudal lord or an influential man in the capital bought his and his family's friendship and personal protection. This allegiance, which often went hand in hand with the voluntary adoption of Mohammedanism, would be initiated as a rule by

commands to the inert masses of the population in any other way' (P. Vinogradoff, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i, p. 633).

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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presents which the applicant brought his patron-to-be. A short trial period established the readiness of the 'client' to fulfil his obligations, and the ceremonial gift of a sword and turban by the patron to his new henchman sealed the pact. Such a pact involved on the part of the client gifts, services, and a regular tithe paid from the produce of his farm; on the part of the protector, help against claims, just or unjust, of other people, against the abuse of power by other feudal lords, sometimes grants of land, and invariably assistance in all matters that had to do with the central authority. In legal affairs, e.g. court cases brought before the central authority in Bida, the protector, residing in the capital, with his knowledge of state affairs and his private influence, would give invaluable help to the powerless ignorant peasant. Even to-day, peasants from the country, when summoned before the court in Bida, invariably go first to see their protector in town, ask for his help or advice, and then appear in court accompanied by one of his men—an outward sign of their close connexion with the powers that be. This system of patronage is involved in the very structure of this rigid class society; it grows to an institution which impresses its stamp on the whole social life of Nupe and indeed all the Emirates of Northern Nigeria. We may call it by the native name, *bara*-ship, from the Hausa and Nupe word *bara*, servant or serf, or by the name by which the same institution was known in Imperial Rome and in the feudal system of medieval Europe: the *patrocinium*, or clientage.[1]

Clientage, this sacrifice of freedom for the sake of political protection, is common to country and capital. But in the capital it has a variety of meanings. First, there are the men who, anxious to obtain political protection, attach themselves loosely to an important personage as his loyal followers without surrendering their independence. These men, who do not work for their patron nor bring him gifts or tributes, are called *egi kata*, 'sons of the house'—the Nupe word for adopted children. Then there are men who become *bara*—real *bara*—because they are poor, and sometimes also because they shirk hard work on the land. Impecunious craftsmen thus hope to obtain a prosperous customer; Mallams a wealthy patron who can use their services; and ex-peasants become servants in the house of their master, are given food and clothes, money for tax, and have their children educated by their patron. Here 'protection' comes to mean freedom from all more serious responsibilities. And lastly, over and above securing material assistance, attachment to a man of rank and influence is a way to secure social promotion, the chance of becoming 'somebody', of being lifted from the ignominy of a commoner's life into the sphere of rank and importance.[2] The man in town who has no land to offer, offers himself and his services. The *bara* attaches himself to the household of his patron; he is servant, messenger, major-domo, soldier in his master's private army. He may rise to the position of a trusted friend and intermarry into his

[1] See P. Vinogradoff, op. cit. i, p. 563, and v, pp. 460–2.

[2] One of my Bida informants, himself a man with numerous *bara*, divided the *bara* into three categories: those who 'are afraid' and seek protection; those who shirk hard work and responsibility; and those who are out for 'greatness'.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neighbouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.